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Believing is Seeing

by J. H. McConkey.



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By James H. McConkey.

"Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (Jno. 11:40.)

The world says seeing is believing. Jesus Christ says believing is seeing. The world's maxim is familiar enough. The man who sees believes. We come into knowledge through the channel of vision. We know the sky, the stars, the clouds, the sea, because we see them with our very eyes. Yet just as real, and quite as simple, is the truth that the man who believes shall see. Faith ever issues into vision. The man who trusts shall know. The believer becomes a seer. And note first here, that—

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The faith which takes God's word shall see.

We remember one year in our boyhood when the Christmas tide had come. Some one must needs play Santa Claus for the children, and the lot fell upon us. Our stripling figure was filled out to the proper Santa Claus rotundness by a convenient

cushion. Our pockets were stuffed to the full with the various gifts of love. And we went about the ministry of distribution. From one to another the packets were passed, until, as we thought, all had been parcelled out. Then came a request from one of the family circle: "Put your hand in your right pocket. There is something there for you." But we shook our head skeptically. Did not we know all the gifts that had been stowed in those pockets? And did not we know there was nothing else there? But again came the word of request. And still we shook our head in decided negative. At last more urgently, "Well, put your hand in the pocket, and try. Believe and you will see." And then to satisfy a loved one, the hand was slipped into the designated pocket. And, lo, out came a parcel, marked with our own name. Within was a beautiful gold watch, the gift of a loving father to his boy. It had been slipped into the pocket all unknown to us. If we had not believed we never would have seen. But when we believed we saw. When we believed—came realization. When we believed—came the joy of possession.

Unsaved friend, it is right here that you

are making a fatal mistake, a mistake which will work your eternal undoing. You say you will not believe until you see. You must have some experience of Christ before you will believe in Christ. But know this. You will have a definite experience of Christ just as soon as you exercise a definite faith in Christ. And you will never have it before. When you believe the light will come. When you believe the peace, the joy, the assurance will come. Like Paul, you will know whom you have believed. But that means you will never know until you believe. Believing will surely bring you to seeing. *But all the seeing in the world will never bring you to believing. Have a definite transaction with Jesus Christ.* Definitely accept Him as your Saviour. Definitely confess Him before men as such. And as surely as you do this you will *definitely* know *the salvation* of God in Christ.

Believe and you shall see.

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The faith which prays shall see.

You have been praying for showers of blessing, and not even a drop has fallen. You have been praying for some barrier

to melt away, and it seems to have grown even greater. You have been crying to God for a flood of light upon your darkened path, and not a single gleam has yet shone. Do not lose heart. Do not faint by the way. For the faith which prays shall see. Petition shall end in vision. The cry of intercession shall give place to the song of thanksgiving.

A young man left a New England city to go as a missionary. Time passed. One night his pastor in the homeland was awakened in the dead of night beset with the fear that his young parishioner was in peril. A great burden of prayer was rolled upon him. He arose and gave himself for hours to earnest intercession for the safety of his friend. At that very time this was happening in the heart of Africa: The missionary, accompanied by a native, had started out to hunt. As they journeyed they ran upon two lions and a lioness. The missionary fired, killing one of the lions, and wounding the other. The lioness seemingly fled. In fact she had only hidden in the jungle. The missionary now advanced and fired again upon the wounded lion. The rifle had scarcely cracked when the great brute lioness leaped upon him from her

ambush. With one blow she struck him to the ground. In an instant her teeth were sunk in his arm and her claws tearing fiercely at his shoulder. He cried out to the native to shoot, but the latter could not, as the missionary was between him and the lioness. In his panic however, the native fired his rifle in the air. At once the lioness looked up. She dropped the missionary from her jaws. He rolled over into the bottom of a shallow ditch. And then instead of leaping upon him and finishing her work, the lioness turned and trotted into the jungle. The bleeding missionary was helped into camp. There, after six weeks, he recovered completely from an experience which it is given to but few men to pass through. God had indeed "stopped the mouths of lions" for him. The tidings of his wonderful escape went back home to his faithful pastor. And he who had *prayed* now *saw*. He saw the peril which had menaced his friend. He *saw* why God had aroused him at midnight to pray. He *saw* the miraculous deliverance which had come to pass. Because he prayed, and prayed in faith, he saw the glory of God in wondrous answer. And so may you — if you pray likewise.

Abraham prayed and saw God meet his petition again and again for wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. Moses prayed and saw God answer for disobedient Israel. Hezekiah prayed and saw the utter rout of the Syrian host. Jesus prayed and the wondering people saw Lazarus break forth from the gloom of the grave. The church prayed and Peter saw the glory of the Lord and the opening gates of prison cell and ward.

Wherefore though no man's—hand—cloud of promise has yet risen upon your horizon—pray, and you shall see. Though as yet no drops from the coming down-pour fall upon your upturned face of intercession—pray and you shall see. Though the granite barrier against which you are hurling your prayer of faith has not budged one hair's breadth—pray, and you shall see. Though the stubborn heart for which you cry unto God in the dark hours of the night does not seem to abate one atom of its hardness—pray, and you shall see. For the faith which prays, and *prays*, and PRAYS, shall surely see. The prayer which is in the will of God shall surely see the glory of God.

The faith which yields shall see.

God is not satisfied with taking your spirit into heaven. He wants to use your life here upon earth. And so you have come to another step of faith, the faith which *yields*. You have come face to face with a decision which, next to acceptance of Christ as your Saviour, is the most momentous a man can ever make—the decision to consecrate your life to God. And you shrink back. You are sore afraid. You do not *see* all that consecration means. You do not *see* how God can make use of your modest talents. You do not *see* how He can adjust your straitened and hedged pathway to a life of devotion to His will. To all this God has but one answer. *Believe* and you shall *see*. For in your life you will see the glory of God whenever, as best you know, you place that life in the will of God.

Here is a plain strip of canvass. Before it stands the master painter. He says, "Do you see that golden sunset? Trust yourself to me and I will paint its glory in your face." And the canvass says, "I am coarse in texture. I am scant in size. I do not see how you can fill me with the glory of

that sunset sky." And the Master says, "*Yield*, and you shall *see*."

Here is a black mass of ore, fresh-dug from the grime of the earth. It is soiled, stained, and mis-shapen. The Master workman takes it in his hand. "There is naught in me for you," says the ore. And the goldsmith says, "I will take you, and melt you, and mold, and carve, and chase you, until there shall be wrought from your blackness a precious cup of gold fit to grace the feast-day of a king." *Yield* and you shall *see*."

And here is a plain, every-day life—*your* life, my friend. And the Master stands before it, and speaks, "Give me your life. It matters not how humble it is, give it to me. And I will chasten it, and enrich it, and anoint it with my Spirit, and glorify my Father in heaven through it." And you are saying, "I do not *see* all that consecration means. I do not see any niche of Christian service into which I can fit." And to all this the Master of our lives has still the same answer, *Yield*—and you shall *see*."

A man stepped up to us one day at the close of a meeting, and said, "I want to tell you a story. Years ago I was teaching a

class of boys in a certain city. There were eight boys in the class. It was in the days before the lesson helps were so plentiful as now, and we were confined to the use of the Bible alone. There was but one Bible for the whole class. This was passed from hand to hand in due order. I noticed especially how the second boy in the class acted when the book reached him in turn. He fumbled at the leaves. He hesitated and halted at words of but ordinary difficulty. The big words he skipped entirely. Yet he was most faithful and persistent in it all. My brother," said the speaker, "that boy was Dwight L. Moody."

Dwight Moody might have deemed his talents too modest for God to use. He might have thought it useless to yield them to Him. He might have decided to lay them up in the napkin. But he did nothing of the kind. He yielded his all to God, as it was. He trusted. He followed on. And the world has not yet ceased to see the glory of God in his wondrous life.

And so shall it be with you. Never mind how feeble your efforts, how frequent your failures. Never mind that you cannot see how or where God can use so humble a life as yours. Never mind that it seems

so fettered by circumstances that God can surely never free it and use it. That is for *Him*, not for you. Keep off God's ground. It is for you simply to yield. God will take care of the rest. And as you *believe* enough to *yield* you will surely *see* the glory of God.

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The faith which waits shall see.

The helpless *must* wait. The patient *do* wait. But the strong, and the eager—how hard it is for them to wait! To wait for the salvation of a soul when your heart is breaking with the suspense; to wait for the consecration of a life while you see the world laying waste its preciousness; to wait for laborers to be thrust forth while the harvest is whitening in death; to wait for God to bring things to pass and see Satan's ravages while you wait: such waiting takes a mighty faith. And yet faith which waits shall surely see. The glory of God comes to the waiting one.

You have been taking a long and wearisome railroad journey. For days you have been traveling through the dust and heat. You are nearing home, and brook with impatience each delay. At midnight you are

awakened by the slowing of your train. It bumps, jars and creaks, and finally comes to a standstill. You wait, and wait. You peer out into the gloom with your face pressed against the car window. Five, ten, twenty minutes pass. Still all is quiet, with no sign of a move. You drum at the window pane. You turn wearily in your berth. You wonder when the weary wait will end. Presently there is a sound in the distance. The rattle and clatter come nearer. Then there is a rush, a roar, the red glare of a great fiery eye and the monster engine and its trail of coaches sweeps by you in an instant and is swallowed up in the encircling darkness. You have *waited* long. Now you *see*. You see in vision the awful death which would have come to you had you gone on. You see the wise forthought which kept you waiting on that track. It was a passing siding and the one safe thing to do was to wait. Had you gone on it would have been to the wreckage and death of a collision.

And so perchance it is with yourself. Is your heart in the mission field and your body at home? Are you eager for the Master's service, yet hindered on every side? Is the horizon of life so narrowed

by circumstances as to become almost unbearable? Yet God's waiting time is best for you. Wait—and you will see your barriers razed. Wait—and you will see your circumstances change. Wait—and you will see God bringing things to pass beyond all your dreams. Wait and you shall see. For "*He worketh for him that waits for Him.*"

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*The faith which does not understand—
shall see.*

Mary and Martha could not understand what their Lord was doing. Both of them said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Back of it all we seem to read their thought, "Lord, we do not understand why you have stayed away so long. We do not understand how you could let death come to the man whom you loved. We do not understand how you could let sorrow and suffering ravage our lives when your presence might have stayed it all. Why did you not come?" It is too late now. For already he has been dead these four days." And to it all Jesus had but one great truth. "You may not understand; but I tell you if you *believe*, you will *see*."

Abraham could not understand why God should ask the sacrifice of his boy. But he trusted. And he *saw* the glory of God in his restoration to his love. Moses could not understand why God should keep him forty years in the wilderness. But he trusted. And he *saw* when God called him to lead forth Israel from bondage. Joseph could not understand the cruelty of his brethren, the false witness of a perfidious woman, and the long years of an unjust imprisonment. But he trusted. And he *saw* at last the glory of God in it all. Jacob could not understand the strange providence which permitted that same Joseph to be torn from his father's love. But he too *saw* the glory of God when he looked into the face of that same Joseph as the viceroy of a great king, and the preserver of his own life and the lives of a great nation.

And so perhaps it is in your life. You say, "I do not understand why God let my dear one be taken. I do not understand why affliction has been permitted to smite me. I do not understand the devious paths by which God is leading me. I do not understand why plans and purposes that seemed good to my eyes should be baffled. I do not understand why blessings I so

much need are so long delayed, and sometimes never come at all. There are so many things in God's dealings with me I cannot understand." Friend, you do not *have* to understand all God's ways with you. God does not expect you to understand them. You do not expect *your* child to understand, only believe. And some day you will *see* the glory of God in the things you do not understand. For we walk by faith, and not by sight. And the glory comes from believing, not from understanding. Remember this:

The things we do not understand are all working together for good to them that trust. (Rom. 8:28.)

You go into a great silk mill. Running the length of the room is a massive steel shaft. It is whirling away, hundreds of revolutions per minute. All the wheels upon it are running in the same direction with it. But across the room are a score of other smaller shafts, called "counter shafts." They are all linked to the great main shaft. But they are all running in exactly the opposite direction. You look up to your friend who is guiding you through the great mill, and say, "I do not understand these counter-shafts. They all

seem to be running the wrong way, opposite to the great main shaft. They must surely all be defeating the purpose of the owner of the mill." "Ah," says your friend, "you are mistaken about that. Just follow me, and you will see." And you follow him down the long aisles into the weaving room. And there you see the busy looms, driven by these very counter-shafts, turning out yard after yard of the rich, lustrous silk for the making of which this great mill is being run. You see that the very counter-shafts which seemed to be working *against* the main shaft are in reality all *working together with* that shaft to carry out the purpose of the mill-owner in turning out the beautiful silken fabric.

Child of God, all things are not *good*. Nor does God say *that*. For sin is not good. And sorrow is not good. Nor is suffering good, in itself. But "all things *work together* for good." And God *does* say *that*. And the things you do not understand, the things which seems to be all working against you, all these are really working together to turn out from God's workshop His one perfect, finished product—a man or woman conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. And con-

cerning these "all things" come Christ's sweet words to us, as to them of old, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst *believe* thou shouldst *see* the glory of God?"

Whate'er is best for me, my God will bring to
me,

If I do only wait, and trust, and pray,
Whate'er seems dark to me, shall end in light
for me;

'Tis but the gloaming which fore-runs the
day.

(FROM HEARING AND DOING.)

